

SN. 09/778,993

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REMARKS

Claims 1-27 and 32 are now pending in this application for which applicants seek reconsideration.

Amendment

Claims 37-39 have been canceled. Claims 1, 6, 11-14, 19, 24-27, and 32 have been amended to further clarify and improve their form. No new matter has been introduced.

Art Rejection

Claims 1-27 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Inoue (USP 5,159,546) in view of York (USP 4,602,776). Applicants traverse this rejection because Inoue and York would not have disclosed or taught controlling the insert sheet as set forth in the independent claims.

Claims 1, 6, 14, 19, 27, and 32 call for stacking a plurality of bundles of insert sheets each for a plurality of pages that are inserted between the image-formed sheets in a predetermined order of pages in which the insert sheets are inserted. Independent claims 11-13 and 24-26 similarly call for stacking a plurality of insert sheets, which are inserted between the sheets having images formed thereon by the image forming means, in a predetermined order in which the insert sheets are inserted. Neither Inoue nor York would have disclosed such features.

Indeed, Inoue discloses inserting or interleaving a sheet of white paper between respective overhead head projector (OHP) sheets. The insert sheets are identical to each other, namely the same white sheets. See column 41, lines 61-65. As the insert sheets are identical, Inoue would not have disclosed or taught stacking the insert sheets in a predetermined order. Moreover, there would not have been any motivation for Inoue to stack or detect identical insert sheets for a predetermined page in the bundles.

The examiner applied York for the proposition that it would have been obvious for Inoue to stack insert sheets in a predetermined order and to discharge insert sheets onto at least one tray other than the tray onto which the insert sheet to be inserted first is designated when the insert sheet fed is not the sheet to be inserted first. Referring to Figs. 2-3, York discloses dividing sheets 62 into groups of insertable items with one or more dividers 64, and directing the remaining insert sheets 62a into the overflow tray 72 when the insert sheets equal in number to the programmed number of copy sets are provided from an inserter 45. See column 6, lines 16-17 and 53-57, and column 9, lines 2-4. Like Inoue, York's insert sheets of each group (insertion

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stack 62a, 62b, 62c, 62d or . . . 62n) are identical. As the insert sheets are identical, York also would not have disclosed or taught stacking the insert sheets in a predetermined order, and there would not have been any motivation for York to stack or detect identical insert sheets for a predetermined page in the bundles.

Accordingly, applicants submit that the combination still would not have taught claims 1, 6, 11-14, 19, 24-27, and 32.

Claims 11-13 and 24-26 further call for feeding blank sheets on which images are to be formed to the image forming means in response to detection of discharging of the insert sheets and/or the sheets having image formed thereon. Even when the recovery process is carried out after jamming of an insert sheet or sheets or an image formed sheet or sheets, it is not necessary to carry out the process of rearranging the order in which insert sheets are fed again, thereby simplifying the sheet feeding control. Neither Inoue nor York would have disclosed or taught feeding subsequent sheets in response to detection of discharging of the insert sheets and/or the image-formed sheets. Accordingly, claims 11-13 and 24-26 further distinguish over Inoue and York.

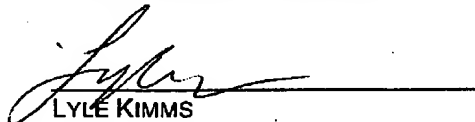
Conclusion

Applicants submit that claims 1-27 and 32 patentably distinguish over Inoue and York, and are in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicants urge the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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DATE


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